Burkley

1/23/70

Dear Howard,

We have been writing back and forth about Finck's presence at the autopsy and how he came to be there. Bearing on this, or on his readiness to be there, his availability, I cite one of the most untrustworthy, least responsible sources, Jim Bishop.

Bishop can be awfully wrong about most things and still right about some. His connections and rep did get him access to people who would be unavailable to most. No matter how incompetent his work, not matter how treecly, it would be wrong to assume anything he says is unworthy of our own thought simply because some people did speak to him.

I have the paperbacked edition only. At the top of p. 306 he says that General Clifton phoned Walter Reed Hospital from the plane "and said the autopsy would be performed there". Toward the bottom of the same page, he tells that Burkley got Mrs. JFK to agree on the ground the bullet (singular) had to be removed for evidence and that it should be a military institution because security was necessary - for a dead man! Naturally,, when he said he was Navy and the President had been Navy, if nothing else made her think to say Bethesda, this should have. If one wanted to built a conspiracy against Burkley.....

However, assuming Cligton did make this call before the plane landed in Washington, Walter Reed was alerted, was expecting to do it, and someone should have been in touch with Finck to be there, if not do the job, because he was head of the Army's wound ballistics branch. So, he should have been at least on tap, and, when it was known the autopsy was to be at Bethesda, might have considered that he might be wanted. If one were to conjecture, because Clifton apparently wanted the Army to do it, would it be unreasonable he might have suggested to Blumberg that he could offer Finck?

Clifton, I know, has a deep disquiet about the assassination, but my source is bound to respect confidence and did have a confidential relationship with him, therefore, I have never mentioned this and cannot. I do not know why.

This is a very bad book and I can take only so much of it at a time. If I find anything else relevent to this, I'll let you know. Meanwhile, assuming Clifton did phone Walter Reed, on his own or in consultation with or at the suggestion of another or others, does it have any meaning to you? It would seem he did not discuss it with Burkley, rather unusualy.

Sincerely,